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ARATUS—"Phenomena," (1)

by C. L. Prince, F. R. A. S., (Lewes. 1895.)

プリンス 散文譯——アラトスの天象詩

Let us dedicate our lay to Zeus, whom we should never leave unadored, for he is ever present at all the assemblies and gatherings of the people, as well as at the sea and its harbours. In all places we are dependent upon him. FOR WE ARE HIS OFFSPRING S. Ever kind to us, he reminds us of our wants, and urges us to toil for our necessary food; likewise he appoints the time for breaking up the clods of earth with the oxen and plough-shares; also the most favourable time for putting the plants into the ground and scattering the seeds into the furrows. He, distributing the stars, arranged the constellations in the sky. He placed them to indicate that season of the year which should give the plainest instructions what time all vegetation should burst forth. Him, therefore, both to men at first and last, it should be their endeavour to please. Hail Father! Marvelous Wonder! Vast benefactor of Mankind! Himself the survivor of a former age. All the charming Muses salute him! If not asking too much I pray you to inspire my song to make mention of the stars. These indeed are many, existing everywhere in the sky, and day by day continuously revolving from age to age.

The axis is always firm, and although it may appear to shift a little, yet it is never much disarranged, while the earth maintains its equilibrium in the centre; and around it the sky turns itself. Also the two Poles terminate at either extremity; one indeed is not visible, but the other to the northward rises high above the ocean. Surrounding it, two Bears lie circularly, which are usually called the Wains. Each has its head inverted upon the loins of the other, but always borne along back to back while the shoulders are alternately reversed.

They would have us believe that they ascended to heaven, from the island of Crete, by the powerful assistance of Zeus himself, because these Bears, when they deceived Saturnus placed him, while still an infant, in a place, odoriferous with flowers, near Mount Ida, and nourished him for a whole year. They called one of these Bears Cynosura (Ursa Minor) and the other Helice (Ursa Major).

The Greeks place faith in Helice in respect of their naval affairs and the direction of their shipping. The Phoenicians have confidence in Cynosura during their voyages.

Helice is clear and readily observed shining brightly at the commencement of the night. The other, Cynosura, is comparatively obscure, but, nevertheless, more useful to the sailor because it revolves in a lesser circle.

By this latter the Sidonians navigate their ships with great accuracy. An immense and

horrid Serpent, flowing along like a river, rolls between these animals, forming a curve on either side of them. The Bears, cautiously avoiding the blue sea, remain fixed on both sides of the folds of the Serpent. The one is evolved by the extremity of its tail, but the other is surrounded by the folds of its body. The upper part of its tail remains at the head of Helice, but he has the head of Cynosura in its fold; this fold turning upon itself winds around her head and extends even to her paws.

Again the Serpent turns upon itself; there is not a single star in this part nor does one shine except in the head, where two stars adorn the temple and other two the eyes; again another, lower down, appears on the extremity of the jaw of the hideous Serpent. Its head is somewhat bent and some points directly toward the tail of Helice. The stars run in line with the mouth and right temple towards the tip of its tail; the head whirls around where, mingled with the tail's tip, it sets and rises again in turn.

Near this revolves a form like a toiling man with which no one is thoroughly conversant; neither is it known for whom he labours, but it is usually called Hercules, and like a man kneeling, for he struggles on his knees; his hands are lifted up higher than both his shoulders and extend as far as he can reach. In the midst, the sole of his right foot is placed upon the head of the winding Serpent.

Near this spot is the Crown which Bacchus placed as a memento of the dying Ariadne and which revolves beneath the shoulder of the wearied Hercules. The Northern Crown is near his shoulder, but the crown of his head is near that of the Serpent-holder; while beyond may be seen the splendid constellation of the Serpent-holder himself and those brightstars in the shoulders which appear lying beneath his head. Their brightness renders them conspicuous, even with the light of the full Moon, but his hands are not of equal importance, for less splendour is emitted from them. Nevertheless, they may be easily observed for their shine distinctly: both are entwined by the Serpent who, midway, coils around the Serpent-holder, but he constantly and firmly presses upon the great reptile, the Scorpion, with both feet, standing up-right, and trampling upon his eye and breast; but the Serpent is held by him with both hands; gently by the right, but more firmly by the left. The upper part of the jaw nearly touches the Crown.

Beneath the Serpent's fold observe the great Claws of the Scorpion; the stars therein are of moderate light and never very bright. After Helice, Arctophylax, very like a waggoner, is borne along commonly known by the name of Bootes, because he appears to drive the Wain of the Bear, and appears conspicuously bright. Beneath his girdle rolls Arcturus, the most brilliant of stars. Below both feet of the waggoner the Virgin appears, who hold in her hand the splendid star Spica. Whether she be the offspring of Astræus, the reputed father of primeval stars, or of some other, matters not. There is another story current among men that she was at one time well acquainted with earth; nor did she shun the society of old men, nor women, but mingled freely with them, although she herself was immortal; moreover, they call her JUSTICE, associating with old men at one time, in the market place, and at another in the open air, she, by her wisdom, demonstrated the laws of State.